

Silver Banner

Winter 2011

Issue 73

Editor: Susan Jacobs

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Hilltown Assoc. of Councils on Aging is to provide and promote programs, activities and services to the senior citizens of the hill town communities of Becket, Dalton, and Peru.

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DALTON SENIOR CENTER UPDATE

Allegrone Construction has completed work on the Dalton Senior Center at 40 Field St. Ext. By the time you read this, the furniture will have been delivered, and we will be making the big move.



Our hope is to open the doors on Monday, Feb. 14th—a real “sweetheart” of a day!

The Grand Opening Celebration will be on Saturday, May 21, 2011 from 11 AM to 2 PM. Residents will be able to have a tour of the building, see demonstrations and exhibits and enjoy refreshments. Staff, COA and Friends Board members as well as COA volunteers will be available to answer questions.

If you have been following the progress of the Capital Fund Drive by The Friends of the Dalton COA, Inc., the thermometer on Main Street shows the success of the campaign. The generosity of this community is incredible. (For more information, please see the “Friends” article on page 3).

The members of the “Furnishings” committee, working with BBE have done a beautiful job of coordinating the interior colors and furnishings. I believe you will find the building warm and welcoming, and full calendar of programs and activities are being planned by the Program/Volunteer Council (See articles on pages 5, 6 & 7 for more information).

AARP Tax Aide Volunteers Taking Appointments

Our dedicated AARP Tax Aide Volunteers are back with us for the new tax season. Richard “Dick” Lacatell (since 2003) and Joanne Monk (in her third season) are again assisting local seniors with their Federal and State returns. Some are also found to be eligible for the “Circuit Breaker” tax credit, and folks who haven’t filed returns in years, are able to access this benefit by filing a State return. The schedule fills up fast, so please call 684-2000 for an appointment.



HILLTOWN NOTES

Becket News (by Joan Moylan & Sonny Nelson) - Not one, but three Holiday Parties were held in December for our Becket folks: December 9th at the Knox Trail Inn; then the Becket Senior Lunch Christmas Party on the 16th at the Town Hall and lastly, a wonderful luncheon at the Russell Inn on the 21st.. The Becket seniors donated \$25 to the party for the town's children.

We are working on a spring trip for our travel group.—Please remember the following programs each month: Blood Pressure Clinic on the 2nd Tuesday; Brown Bag on the 3rd Friday, and Pot Luck Lunch on the 4th Friday.

News from Peru (From Barbara Lufkin)

Our January luncheon was successful with 19 people attending. Eight of those remained after lunch to play Wii Bowling and work on a puzzle. It was a good time for all. Luncheons are held on the first Thursday of the month in the Town Hall.

Two residents took advantage of a seminar offered by Cathy Spinney on Medicare supplements, etc.

The HEN (Hilltown Elder Network) program is officially up and running in Peru. Our HEN coordinator is Amy Phinney. Amy has worked with HEN as a caregiver in Worthington for about 3 years and is anxious to get clients in Peru. We have several possible, and at least one person applying to be a caregiver.

Our HOPE program is very popular. HOPE Nurse, Mary Kane from the Worthington Health Center comes every first Thursday (luncheon day) to take blood pressures and help with any medical concerns that anyone has. She has begun making visits to homes of those seniors who need medical assistance.

Note: Amy and Mary are residents of Peru.

Dalton has a new Public Health Nurse

Nurse, Lois Bessette is Dalton's new Public Health Nurse. Lois will be holding monthly Blood Pressure Clinics in the Senior Center on the fourth Thursday from 10-12 beginning February 24th.

Lois will be familiar to many of you, having worked with the Dalton Board of Health to organize last fall's H1N1 community and school clinics. Welcome aboard, Lois!

Online Health Information You Can Trust

MedlinePlus

Trusted Health Information for You

<http://medlineplus.gov>

If you need health information, then this web site is for you! MedlinePlus.gov is the National Library of Medicine's health information web site for the public. On this web site, you will find information on over 800 health topics, along with helpful videos, tutorials, and health check tools. MedlinePlus.gov includes a medical dictionary for those tricky medical words. There is also a section on drugs and herbal medicines. If you need the latest news on a topic, this site is the place to go.

Be sure to go to <http://medlineplus.gov> the next time you need health information. If you don't have your own computer, don't fret—you can use the web site at your local public library with the help of a librarian.



By Michelle Eberle, Consumer Health Information Coordinator, National Network of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region

NEWS FROM DALTON

From the Friends of the Dalton COA,

Inc.: (Marjorie Limburg, Pres.) [The Friends of the Dalton COA is a non-profit group whose focus is to support the work of the COA.]

As you may have seen during and after the “Light Up the Holidays” event, the thermometer marking the progress of the Friends Capital Campaign went over the top! We can’t thank all of you enough for your generosity. Donations have been received from so many of our “friends” here and as far away as Florida and California.

The sale of the bricks has ended for now, with 155 having been purchased. The Memorial Garden design is being finalized, and work will begin in the spring. Our special thanks go to Barbara Bartels who headed up this project.

Everyone who has visited the Center has been impressed with the design by Dennis Adler of Hill Engineers, Architects & Planners with lots of input from the Senior Center Building Committee. The quality of the construction by Allegrone Construction is also obvious and a source of many positive comments. The interior colors recommended by Mary Proskin of BBE Office Interiors are warm and inviting, and the Furnishings Committee headed up by Joyce Lacatell with Carol Powell, Carol Morrison and Maureen Mitchell working with Mary have done a phenomenal job of choosing the furniture and accessories.

Our **Grand Opening Celebration** will be held on Saturday, May 21, 2011. Look for more about that in our next issue of the Banner.

Special Note for GE Employees and Retirees:

The Friends has been approved by the GE Foundation to receive matching gifts. In the initial disbursement to the Friends in November, we received \$7,015—all because of your generosity. Thank you!

If you have any questions, you can call me for more information at 684-1434. - *Marjie*

From the Office of Consumer Affairs & Business

Consumer Advisory

Regulation, Barbara Anthony, Undersecretary, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 5170, Boston, MA 02116.

The New Year is a Good Time to Review your Credit Report

Now that the holidays are over and the new year is upon us, it's a good time to check your credit report. You are entitled to one free credit report every 12 months from each of the big three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

You can choose to get all three credit reports at once; however, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommends that you space them out every three to four months. That way, you will be able to keep track of any changes to your credit report throughout the year, rather than just once a year.

There are three ways to get your free annual credit report, not including a credit score:

1. Online at annualcreditreport.com (the only authorized on-line source for your free annual credit report)
2. By phone toll-free at 1-877-322-8228
3. Fill out the Annual Credit Report Request Form [*copies available at the Senior Center*] and mail it to:

Annual Credit Report Request Service
PO Box 105281
Atlanta, GA 30348-5281

If you are going online, be sure that you are actually visiting the Annual Credit Report website, since imposter sites may intentionally misspell the web address to get you to visit their site accidentally to submit personal information.

Also be wary of other sites that claim to provide “free” credit reports, as they often come with strings attached, such as requiring you to pay for a product or service. If you paid for what you thought was your free annual credit report, file a complaint with the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov. (Cont. pg 7)

ELDER SERVICES—OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Elder Services Long Term Care Ombudsman Program was established by the federal government in 1973. Massachusetts was among the first six pilot projects; it has since been a pioneer in the field.

The term, "Ombudsman" is a medieval Swedish word. In the early 1700's, a Swedish King appointed an Ombudsman, or citizen representative to investigate complaints against his royal officers. In Berkshire County, we have 21 Ombudsman volunteers who visit 16 of our nursing and rest homes once a week to speak to the residents and family members about their concerns. The program has four main goals:

1. To receive, investigate and resolve complaints made by, or on behalf of residents of nursing and rest homes.
2. To protect resident's rights.
3. To provide information.
4. To advocate for positive changes to the Long Term Care System.

If you are having difficulty addressing concerns in a nursing home, please contact Program Director, Dorinda Gamberdella, or Assistant Director, Dermot Sporbett at Elder Services Ombudsman Program at 499-0524. Your Ombudsman will be contacted to intervene on your behalf, or to support you and help get the answers you are unable to get. The Ombudsman in your facility is listed on the Resident's Rights Poster that is in every Nursing Home.

For a listing of all nursing homes in Berkshire County, please visit our web page on the Elder Services' web site at www.esbci.org. There are over 30 links to such web sites as the Department of Public Health, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, AARP, the Commission on Law and Aging, Benefits Check Up, Hospice in the Berkshires and the National Long Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center.



If a stranger calls, be prepared to hang up if:

1. I say no, but the person keeps talking.
2. Wants money for a prize I am told I have won.
3. Offers to send a courier to take my check.
4. Wants my credit card or bank account number.
5. Insists I make an immediate financial decision.
6. Offer—for a fee—to recover money I lost previously.
7. I just begin to feel uncomfortable.
8. I suspect a fraud.

Clip & Save



Then I should call:

Attorney General's Consumer Complaint Line at (617) 727-8400

The National Fraud Information Center at 1-800-876-7060

Source: John Bordenet, AARP Criminal Justice

Program/Volunteer Council

This group has been hard at work expanding the programs and activities to be offered in the new, Dalton Senior Center. Announcements of many are included in this issue. Continued planning is underway for new programs for men, support groups, cooking for those with special diets, etc.



The Dalton Travelers, under the direction of Andre Robert and friends will be meeting with interested folks in the Café on the third Tuesday from 8-10 AM each month. On March 15th, they will host a presentation by Collette Tours at 11 AM, also in the Café.

A trip to the **Boston Flower Show** is scheduled on March 16th. Call the Center at 684-2000 for more information.

A Garden Group will begin meeting each Monday afternoon from 1-3 PM on March 7th. Master Gardener, Nancy Cooper is chairing this committee whose members will be looking at ways to beautify the Center's grounds,



including perennial and raised gardens, and foundation plantings. A Serenity Garden has also been suggested, so please bring your ideas and "green thumbs" to the Monday afternoon gatherings.

Introduction to Computers will be taught by Andy Robert on Wednesday afternoons from 3-4 beginning March 2nd.. Following this, he will hold an (almost) weekly class on a variety of computer topics. For more information, call the Center at 684-2000.

Foot Care Clinics will be held at the Center in the new Health Room beginning March 15th. Appointments are required and can be made by calling 684-2000.

Calling all Knitters & Crocheters

to join us on Tuesday afternoons from 1-3 This group is for beginners who want to learn, as well as for those more accomplished who have unfinished projects or are looking for new patterns and challenges. Helga Knappe and Martha Seymour are organizing this group which promises to be an enjoyable and productive time for all.



Health Issues Concerning the Post-Menopausal Woman

On March 18th from 12-2 at our new Dalton Senior Center, Dr. Elisa Benzoni will speak on all those topics you wanted to know about but haven't asked. Dr. Benzoni will be giving an in-

formative talk on "Health Issues Concerning the Post-Menopausal Woman". Some topics covered will be pelvic prolapse, urinary leakage, dryness and bleeding. There will also be a question and answer period.



Dr. Elisa Benzoni is an obstetrician/gynecologist with

"Associated Women's Health Specialists" in Waterbury, Ct. She is one of the few physicians in her area proficient in robotic surgery. She graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. She interned at Berkshire Medical Center and did her residency at the Medical Center of Delaware.

A mother of 4 boys, she is married to Dalton native, Brian Rosenhein. Since she is a runner (5 times All American) and a triathlon participant, she can also answer any questions you may have about exercising.

You are invited to bring a bag lunch; dessert and beverages will be provided. Call ahead at 684-2000 to reserve a seat for this important program on March 18th from 12-2.

Calling All Quilters!

Quilting Workshops will be offered in the new Dalton Senior Center every Thursday from 10:30 AM to 3 PM. The "Disappearing Nine Patch," a versatile pattern suitable for beginner and experienced sewers is planned for the first session on February 17th. Maureen Mitchell, who has been quilting for many years is leading this class. For more information and to register, call the Center at 684-2000.



Beginner Bridge classes will be taught by Edna Mae Kincaid on Wednesday afternoons from 1-3 starting on March 2nd. Pre-registration is necessary and can be made by calling 684-2000. [The Bridge Group that has been meeting at the CRA for several years will also move to the Center.]

Pitch will be offered on Friday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30. For anyone curious about the game and how it is played, a demonstration session is scheduled on February 18th. Bernie Levesque along with other long-time players will be available to explain this fun card game.



Mahjongg will move to the new Center on Fridays from 10:30 to 12:30. Instruction for this fascinating game is available for newcomers; tables for more practiced players can be arranged. Call 684-2000 or stop by the Center for more information.

Oil Painting is another program moving to the Center from the CRA on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 3 PM. Artist, Fauna Autenwreith will offer a demonstration of her painting techniques on February 15th beginning at 12:30 PM. Paintings done by members of her class will also be on display. (There is an instruction fee of \$15/class, paid directly to the teacher).

BUILD A BLUEBIRD HOUSE

Inviting Men & Women

Join us at the new Dalton Sr. Center on Friday, February 25 from 1-4 when Mark Hoag, from Hoag's Home Projects has volunteered to show us how. No carpentry experience is needed.

We also will be painting the houses. If you have a small amount of exterior paint (Mark recommends a lighter color for birdhouses), please bring it. If you don't have paint, a limited amount will be available. For those interested in decorating a bit more, we will also have whimsical wood cut-outs to paint and add to houses. (Please bring a hammer if you have one available).

We are also hoping to have a guest speaker to give us information on the nesting habits and best locations for our new "homes" for these beautiful birds.

A nominal fee will be charged for materials. Since Mark is precutting the houses, class size is limited and pre-registration is required. Please call the Council on Aging, 684-2000, before Friday, February 18th.



Come to the Café

The Senior Center Café will be open from 8 to 10 AM each Monday through Friday (with the exception of holidays). The building will be equipped with Wifi, so you can bring your laptop to the Café and enjoy morning coffee there with others.



(Consumer Advisory, cont. from pg. 3)

If you receive an unsolicited email offering you a free credit report or claiming to be from annualcreditreport.com or any of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies, do not respond. It is probably a scam. Forward such emails to the FTC at spam@uce.gov.

Once you receive your credit reports, be sure to read through them carefully. If you see anything suspicious or find inaccuracies, immediately contact the credit bureaus to notify them of the problem/s. Your credit report will contain information on how to dispute incorrect information.



If you have any problems getting your free credit reports, call the FTC's toll-free number (1-877-FTC-HELP) for assistance.

Dalton Senior Center Van Schedule To Expand

With the opening of the new Senior Center, we are pleased to announce that our Van Service will be expanding from four to five days a week by mid-March. Transportation is available for all Dalton residents age 60 and over and disabled of any age.

Reservations for rides must be made a minimum of 24 business hours in advance. The majority of trips are for medical appointments (which are the priority), but you can also do your banking, go to the hairdresser or barber, shopping or other needs. We transport within Dalton and to Pittsfield. If the schedule allows, we will also go to the Berkshire Mall.

Trips to the Center are \$1.50 each way; all other trips are \$3.00 each way with payments being made to the COA office.



For more information, call 684-2000.

Dalton Veterans Agent Schedules Monthly Office Hours at Dalton Senior Center

Veterans Agent, Dan Casey will be available to meet with local veterans and their families at the Dalton Senior Center on the first Friday of the month from 1-3 PM on the following dates: March 4th, April 1st and May 6th. You may drop in, or can leave a message to arrange a visit by calling 684-6111 ext. 19.

More Special Events Coming Up

"Ask Me Three" is a program from BMC Patient Safety. On Monday, March 7th, presenters will offer tips on how to make the most of your appointment with your medical doctor beginning at 12:30 PM at the Dalton Senior Center. This is a free program and open to the public.

Medication Management will be presented at the Center by Jan Finklestein, RN on Monday, April 11th beginning at 12:30 PM. In addition to the importance of carefully managing and monitoring medications, she will discuss tips and tactics for preventing falls. This also is a free program and open to the public.

CAREGIVER EXPO will be held at the Crowne Plaza on Tuesday, April 12th from 5-8 PM. Presented jointly by the Berkshire Alzheimer's Partnership, the Alzheimer's Assoc., Elder Services and many other agencies, this is an excellent opportunity for anyone giving care to a family member or friend to get valuable information on help that is available. For more information, please call Elder Services at 499-0524, or the Alzheimer's Assoc. at 413-787-1113.

Shakespeare Join us on Wed., April 17th at the Senior Center as Richard Clark presents, a solo performance of Shakespeare's Greatest Hits: **"The Lunatic, the Lover and the Poet."** Supported in part by a grant from the Dalton Cultural Council, this program is free and open to the public.

Phone: 413-684-2000
Fax: 413-684-4033
Email: dcoa@bcn.net

400 Main Street
Dalton, MA 01226

HILLTOWN ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS ON
AGING, INC.

*Marcia Brophy, Dalton
Helga Knappe, Dalton
Sonny Nelson, Becket
Joan Moylan, Becket
Barbara Lufkin, Peru*

Board of Directors

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Available at the new Dalton Senior Center:

Besides fun, opportunities to learn, meet with friends, make new friends, fun, exercise for your body as well as your brain..... and did I mention, FUN? The new Center, located at 40 Field Street Ext. (please enter from this street) is warm, welcoming, and as my (almost) 88 year old mother described it, "Perfect!" Please stop by to visit. We are open from 8 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Our enthusiastic volunteer greeters look forward to welcoming you.



"BREAKFAST CLUB"

Who doesn't like a yummy breakfast with a very social group of people? This popular monthly event is moving to the Center on the fourth Friday at 8:30 AM. It includes a walk (weather permitting), breakfast and a speaker or other program.

Call 684-2000 early to make your reservation.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM THE DALTON WATER COMMISSIONERS

This winter has been especially hard for the town's crew. With only two trucks, Gibby and his team cannot keep all of the hydrants open without your help.

Please—when you shovel or snowblow your yard, give attention to the fire hydrant in your neighborhood. Keeping it open and available to the Fire Dept. can mean the difference between saving your house in a fire, or losing it.

Thank you for your help in keeping our town safe.

